



LIFE EDUCATION NATIONAL CHILDRENS SURVEY:

May 2008

**Perceptions and Misconceptions
amongst 9-11 year olds in
relation to alcohol use**



Life Education Centres

Introduction

Government policy is informed by the data available in relation to young people's perceptions and use of alcohol which records the views of 11-15 year olds.

Life Education believes work must start with younger children and be informed by them. This survey was conducted to help inform Life Education's health and drug education work with primary school children through a better understanding of younger children's perceptions of adult alcohol use. It was conducted as part of a larger survey, including children's attitudes to other drugs and this will be released at a later date.

Methodology

After an initial pilot phase to validate the question set, the survey was carried out with 1491 children aged 9-11 in England and Northern Ireland between April 24 and May 15 2008.

Schools were invited to take part by local Life Education groups around the country. 30 were originally identified and were sent packs. 25 returned completed questionnaires by the deadline of May 15. A total of 2136 survey forms were sent out to schools, of which 1491 (70%) were received by the deadline.

Schools were sent a pack of forms, one for each child in Year 5 & 6 classes. They were completed in class and returned to Life Education for analysis. This was carried out by the independent organisation, BCDP.

The survey (attached) consisted of 9 questions, with a mixture of prompted and unprompted answers.

In reporting the results, reference is made to data provided by the Office of National Statistics and the NHS for information, but no attempt is made to check the accuracy of children's perceptions. However a parallel survey is being conducted with parents and carers to understand their views of children's knowledge, attitudes and perceptions. The results of this survey will be published later in the year.

Findings

This is a summary of the most significant findings of the survey. Full results are available, and a detailed analysis of the implications for Life Education's work is being prepared.

Headlines

1. 1 in 4 children believe beer drinkers normally consume 4 pints or 6 bottles an evening
3.5 pints or 6 330ml bottles of 4% beer is classified as binge drinking for a man (see Appendix)
2. 1 in 3 children think adults who drink wine, drink 5 or more glasses of wine in one night.
5.3 glasses of 12% wine is classified as binge drinking for a man (4 glasses for a woman) (see Appendix)
3. 3 out of 5 children think people drink alcohol to forget about problems.
4. 1 in 8 children think people become aggressive or violent when they drink alcohol.

Demographic breakdown of responses

	Total	%	AGE			GENDER	
			9	10	11	Girl	Boy
Total	1491	100%	224	734	510	754	725
Midlands	366	25%	38%	25%	18%	24%	25%
North	513	34%	29%	32%	40%	35%	33%
South	349	23%	21%	24%	23%	23%	24%
N Ireland	263	18%	11%	19%	19%	18%	17%

Note: some respondents did not give an indication of age or gender

Alcohol

1. 65% of all children surveyed think that most adults drink alcohol at least 3-4 times a week.
2. 32% thought most adults drink alcohol less than 2 times a week or less.
3. 15% thought most adults drink every day

Note in the ONS General Household Survey, 2006, 55% of adults said they had either not drunk at all, or only on one day the previous week, and only 10% said they had drunk on every day (see Appendix)

Alcohol Q 1 How often do you think most adults drink alcohol?

Prompted response

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
Every Day	15%	17%	15%	13%	14%
5-6 times a week	13%	14%	14%	13%	9%
3-4 times a week	37%	36%	37%	39%	34%
1-2 times a week	28%	24%	25%	28%	38%
Less often	3%	4%	3%	2%	2%
Never	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Other/varies/not stated	4%	4%	4%	2%	2%

4. 86% of children thought that it was unimportant for adults to drink alcohol to have fun. (But see point 7 below)

Alcohol Q2 At the weekend, how important is it for people to drink alcohol to have fun

	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
Not important (1.0)	80%	81%	89%	86%
Important (2.0)	14%	15%	7%	8%
Very important (3.0)	5%	2%	3%	6%
Unstated	1%	2%	0%	0%

5. When children see people drinking on television, 58% think they drink too much.

Alcohol Q3a Have you seen people on TV who drink alcohol?

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
Yes	87%	87%	84%	89%	89%
No	5%	6%	4%	5%	3%
Don't know/not stated	9%	7%	12%	6%	8%

Alcohol Q3b If Yes, when you see people on TV drinking, do you think they drink too much?

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
Yes	58%	57%	57%	61%	59%
No	19%	19%	20%	19%	20%
Don't know	22%	25%	23%	20%	21%

6. 30% of children think adults who drink wine normally drink 5 or more glasses of wine in one night. 5.3 glasses of 12% wine is classified as binge drinking for a man (4 glasses for a woman)

Alcohol Q4: How much would someone who drinks wine normally drink in one night? Unprompted

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
1 glass	13%	11%	11%	20%	8%
2 glasses	34%	36%	32%	39%	27%
3 glasses	12%	11%	12%	12%	15%
4 glasses	5%	5%	5%	3%	8%
5 glasses	4%	4%	4%	3%	7%
6 glasses	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%
7 glasses	1%	1%	-	-	1%
More than 7	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
1 bottles	16%	16%	18%	13%	19%
2 bottles	4%	5%	4%	3%	5%
More than 2	2%	2%	2%	-	2%
Lots (unspecified)	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%
Don't know/unstated	5%	4%	5%	5%	3%
Total 5 or more glasses (including bottles)	30%	32%	30%	21%	37%

7. 28% of children think that adults who drink beer normally drink 4 pints or 6 bottles in one evening. 3.5 pints or 6 330ml bottles of 4% beer is classified as binge drinking for a man. (see appendix)

Alcohol Q5: How much beer would someone who drinks beer normally drink in one night? Unprompted

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
1 pint	6%	6%	6%	11%	2%
2 pints	13%	12%	14%	14%	10%
3 pints	11%	10%	12%	12%	10%
4 pints	6%	7%	7%	5%	5%
5 pints	5%	6%	4%	4%	5%
6 pints	2%	3%	2%	3%	2%
7 pints	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
More than 7	3%	6%	2%	2%	5%
Totals 4 pints or more	19%	24%	16%	16%	19%
1 bottles	6%	5%	5%	7%	5%
2 bottles	11%	7%	12%	16%	8%
3 bottles	8%	10%	6%	8%	9%
4 bottles	5%	4%	4%	4%	9%
5 bottles	5%	5%	5%	3%	7%
6 bottles	3%	4%	4%	1	5%
7 bottles	1%	2%	-	-	2%
8 bottles	1%	2%	-	1%	2%
More than 8	4%	5%	2%	1%	7%
Totals 6 bottles or more	9%	11%	6%	3%	16%
Lots (unspecified)	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Don't know/unstated	5%	4%	8%	4%	3%
Total 4 pints/6 bottles or more	28%	36%	20%	20%	36%

8. 57% thought that people drank alcohol to have a good time (ranging between 67% in the Midlands to 51% in Northern Ireland).
9. This was similar to the number of children who thought that they drink to forget about problems (ranging from 63% in the Midlands to 51% in the South)

Alcohol Q6 Why do people drink alcohol? Prompted response, multiple answer allowed

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
To forget about problems	58%	63%	58%	55%	55%
To have a good time	57%	67%	56%	54%	51%
It makes them relaxed	47%	46%	50%	50%	40%
Because their friends drink alcohol	46%	47%	41%	47%	52%
To look cool	43%	40%	40%	46%	49%
It makes them happy	43%	50%	41%	41%	41%
They like it (unprompted response)	4%	3%	5%	6%	3%
Other reasons/unstated	5%	7%	5%	3%	2%

10. 13% of children thought that adults became aggressive/violent when they drank alcohol
11. 52% thought they acted silly/stupid

Alcohol Q7: How do people act when they drink alcohol? Unprompted answer.

Response	Total	Midlands	North	South	N.Ire
They act silly/stupid	52%	54%	50%	50%	55%
Makes them uncoordinated/clumsy	18%	15%	18%	20%	17%
Makes them aggressive/violent	13%	9%	13%	13%	15%
They get a sore head/ill/sick/dizzy	12%	13%	10%	15%	11%
Different affects/varies/depends how much drunk	6%	5%	6%	8%	2%
Crazy	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Makes them happy	5%	6%	7%	3%	4%
Brave/bravado/think they are invincible	5%	3%	5%	7%	4%
Makes them abusive	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Makes them angry/cross	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%
Makes them funny	3%	5%	2%	1%	4%
Sleepy/drowsy	3%	4%	3%	2%	1%
They think they are cool	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Makes them relaxed/calm	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Makes them sad/emotional	1%	1%	-	1%	0%
Other/Don't Know/Unstated	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%

12. 68% knew the age at which someone can be sold alcohol is 18

Q8 How old does someone have to be to be sold alcohol legally?

Unprompted

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
14	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
15	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
16 or less	6%	4%	5%	5%	10%
17	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
18	68%	70%	69%	59%	77%
19	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
20	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
21+	21%	22%	22%	30%	8%
Don't know/unstated	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%

13. 54% of children think that some adults choose not to drink because it's bad for them. This figure is 71% in Northern Ireland.

Alcohol Q9 Why do some people choose not to drink alcohol?

Unprompted

	Total	Midlands	North	South	N Ire
They know it is bad for them/Can kill them	54%	54%	49%	48%	71%
Makes them behave silly	17%	21%	18%	16%	8%
To stay fit/healthy	7%	4%	8%	10%	6%
Don't like the taste/Don't like alcohol	7%	8%	6%	9%	5%
They are sensible	6%	4%	6%	7%	5%
Don't like the side effects	5%	5%	6%	7%	2%
Makes them feel ill/gives them a sore head	4%	4%	4%	6%	2%
They know it is addictive	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%
To give a good impression to children/others	4%	4%	3%	4%	3%
Makes them aggressive/violent	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%
Religious reasons/Against their religion	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%
Other (less than 2%)	5%	6%	5%	4%	2%
Don't know	3%	1%	4%	3%	2%

Appendix

Statistics on alcohol

1. General Household Survey 2006, Office for National Statistics

Table Number of Days on which adults drank last week

0 days	36%
1 day	19%
2 days	14%
3 days	9%
4 days	6%
5 days	4%
6 days	3%
7 days	10%

Maximum daily amount drunk last week

Max daily amount	All men %		All women %
Nothing	28%	Nothing	43%
4 units or less	32%	3 units or less	24%
More than 4, up to 8 units	17%	More than 3 up to 6 units	18%
More than 8, up to 12 units	10%	More than 6, up to 9 units	6%
More than 12 units	12%	More than 9 units	9%

For men, the following approximate figures have been calculated by removing from the above table those who on average drink less than 1 unit a week

Table – maximum daily amount of those who on average drink more than one unit a week (note – this will be subject to rounding errors)

Max daily amount	All men %
Nothing	19%
4 units or less	35%
More than 4, up to 8 units	19%
More than 8, up to 12 units	12%
More than 12 units	14%